

3. (Once Amended) The cervical brace of claim 2, wherein said vest further comprises a back plate.

4. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 1, wherein said chin strut extends in a straight line from the chest plate to the chin support.

5. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 1, wherein the chin support is adjustable relative to the chest plate.

6. (As filed) The cervical collar of claim 5, wherein adjustability is provided due to attachment of said chin support and said chest plate using hook-and-loop fasteners.

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7. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 1, further comprising:
a back plate;
an occipital support; and
a rear strut extending between said occipital support and said back plate.

8. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 7 further including straps for securing said back plate to said chest plate.

9. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 7 wherein said rear strut is adjustable and further comprises a strut lock.

10. (As filed) The cervical brace of claim 9 wherein said strut lock comprises an eccentric lever for locking one end of said rear strut to a bracket affixed to said back plate.

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14. (Once Amended) The brace of claim 32, wherein said latch and latch housing comprise an eccentric element that moves into and out of engagement with a locking

mechanism, whereby the angle of the rear strut relative to the rear portion may be adjusted.

C3 16. (Once Amended) The brace of claim 28, wherein said latch housing and said latch comprise corresponding serrated surfaces that move into and out of engagement upon rotation of said latch relative to said housing.

17. (Once Amended) The brace of claim 32, further comprising a head strap extending from said occipital support.

18. (Twice Amended) The brace of claim 32, wherein said latch housing comprises one or more extensions and the vest comprises one or more locking slots, whereby said extensions and said locking slots engage said rear strut with said vest.

19. (As filed) A method of supporting one of the cervical spine or upper thoracic spine of an injured patient comprising:

attaching a cervical collar to the patient;

attaching a chin strut from an edge of the cervical collar adjacent the chin of the patient to a chest plate and adjusting the relative position of the head by selecting a relative position between the chin strut and the chest plate; and

attaching the chest plate to the patient's thorax.

20. (As filed) The method of claim 19, further comprising:

attaching an occipital support to the patient;

attaching a rear strut to the occipital support;

attaching a back plate to the patient; and

adjusting the rear strut and locking the rear strut to the back plate.

C4 24. (Once Amended) A cervical brace comprising:

a cervical collar having front and rear portions, wherein said rear portion comprises an occipital support;

a vest comprising a front plate and a back plate, and means for attachment of said front plate to said cervical collar front portion, wherein said back plate is free from attachment to said cervical collar rear portion.

25. (As filed) A cervical brace comprising:

(a cervical collar having front and rear portions, wherein said rear portion comprises an occipital support;

a vest comprising a front plate and a back plate; and

means for attachment of said collar to said vest, wherein said front plate comprises a lower plate slidably and lockably engaged to an upper plate to thereby allow adjustment of the height of said front plate.

26. (New Claim) The method of claim 19 further comprising:

adjusting the vertical height of the chest plate independently of said adjustment of the relative position of said chin strut and said chest plate.

27. (New Claim) The cervical brace of claim 1 wherein said chest plate comprises a lower portion and an upper portion; and

wherein a distance between said lower and upper chest plate portions is adjustable.

28. (New Claim) The cervical brace of claim 1 wherein said chin strut is detachably connected to said chin support of said cervical collar.

29. (New Claim) A cervical brace for attachment to a cervical collar comprising:

a chest plate adapted to be secured to the thorax of a wearer; and
a chin strut attached to said chest plate, said chin strut including means for attaching to said chest plate and means for detachably connecting to a chin support of said cervical collar, said chin support adapted to be disposed adjacent said wearer's chin.

30. (New Claim) A cervical brace for attachment to a cervical collar comprising:

a chest plate adapted to be secured to the thorax of a wearer, said chest plate having a lower portion and an upper portion wherein a distance between said lower and upper chest plate portions adjustable; and

a chin strut attached to said chest plate, the chin strut including means for attaching to a chin support of said cervical collar, said chin support adapted to be disposed adjacent said wearer's chin.

31. (New Claim) The cervical brace of claim 27 wherein said chin strut is adjustably attached to said chest plate.

32. (New Claim) A cervical brace comprising:

a cervical collar having front and rear portions, wherein said rear portion comprises an occipital support;

a vest comprising a front plate and a back plate;

a rear strut extending between said occipital support and said back plate;

a rear strut latch, whereby the relative position of said rear strut may be adjusted both angularly and vertically;

a latch and latch housing disposed on said rear portion; and

wherein said latch housing comprises one or more receiving elements that engage said latch to adjust the relative distance between said cervical collar and said vest.

33. (New Claim) A cervical brace comprising:

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a cervical collar having front and rear portions, wherein said rear portion comprises an occipital support;
a vest comprising a front plate and a back plate means for attaching said front plate to said back plate; and
a rear strut extending from said back plate to said rear portion;
wherein said rear strut includes means for independently adjusting the height and angle of attachment of said rear strut to said back plate.

34. (New Claim) A cervical brace for attachment to a cervical collar comprising:
a chest plate adapted to be secured to the thorax of a wearer; and
a chin strut attached to the chest plate and extending non-vertically from the chin of a wearer to the chest plate, the chin strut including means for attachment to said chest plate and means for attachment to a chin support of said cervical collar, said chin support to be disposed adjacent said wearer's chin.
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